

# NHB/NMRTC Bremerton *Caduceus*

## *A Monthly Recap of info, insight & issues for September, 2022*



### **A Quality Quartet of Chief Selectees**

By Douglas H Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer -- For Gunner's Mate 1st Class Tristan Brayman, lingering at work on his day off with wife and young son was a hopeful undertaking based on equal parts anticipation, expectancy and possibility.

Brayman was one of approximately 25 eligible Sailors assigned to Navy Medicine Readiness Training Command Bremerton waited anxiously September 6, 2022, for the announcement that they were selected to become a chief petty officer.

Brayman, along with Hospital Corpsmen 1st Class Cyrus Cunningham, Ferrell Jenkins and Sonny Paul Soriano, were notified by command leadership that they were chosen to be part of the Fiscal Year 2023 Navy Chief Petty Officer ranks.

Each is about to embark upon a name-change like no other.



Yet for Brayman, after receiving the news from Capt. Patrick Fitzpatrick, Naval Hospital Bremerton director and NMRTC Bremerton commanding officer and Command Master Chief James B. May, he immediately phoned his father, a retired master chief information systems technician.

"Did you make it?" was the greeting from Brayman's dad.

After hearing that leadership was there with his son, the elder Brayman had his answer.

"Captain [Fitzpatrick], this is indeed great news. I'll be glad to meet you at the pinning ceremony," Brayman's dad said, as his son teared up.

"He never does that," shared Brayman wife.

When the Preventive Medicine department finally located Jenkins off doing a myriad of normal duties and responsibilities so he could be officially notified of being selected, he let out a shout of joy.

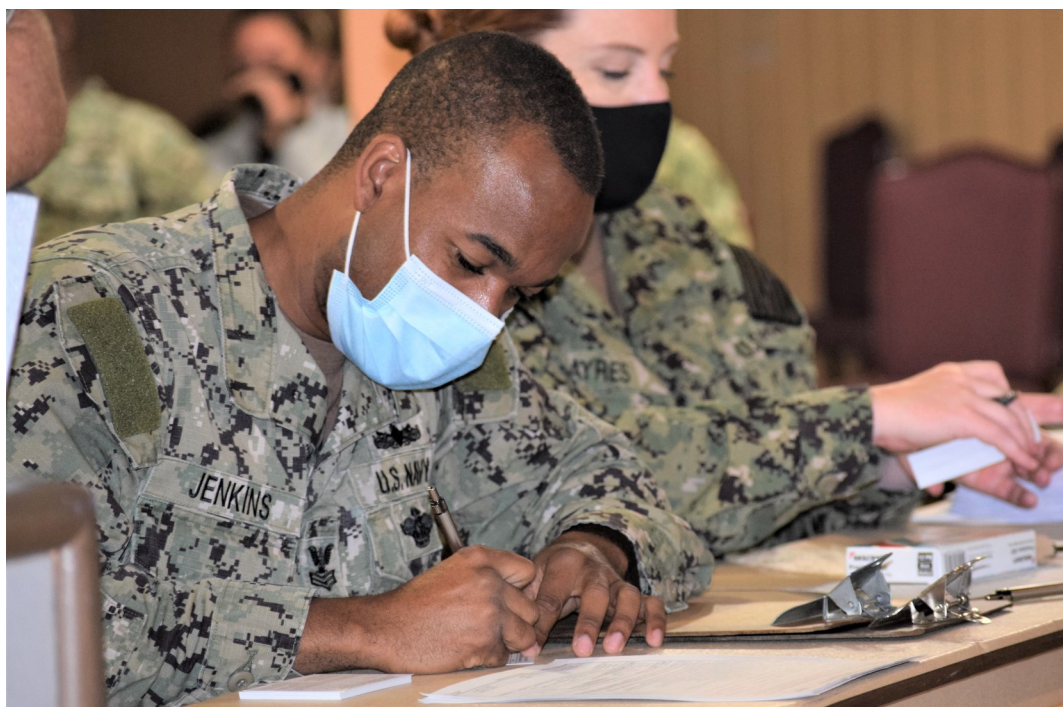
"Yay! Thank you so much," exclaimed Jenkins. "This isn't just about me. I am so grateful to everyone who helped me get here."

Soriano, Directorate of Clinical Support Service leading petty officer, x-ray technologist, and NMRTC Bremerton Senior Sailor of the Year, was rendered speechless upon being informed. "I thank everyone," a visibly moved Soriano said.

Cunningham, with specialty training as a pharmacy technician, was told by leadership first thing in the morning.



"I really didn't think my chances were that good," said Cunningham. "My dad is prior Navy and he's very proud. Family is excited. All my co-workers are happy for me, too."



In no other branch of the service is there such a notable transformation from one enlisted rank paygrade to another than when a U.S. Navy Sailor becomes a chief.

“We are very proud and happy for those being promoted,” shared Fitzpatrick.

The manner of promotion to the rank of chief in the Navy is a unique process compared to the other branches in the armed forces. In the Army, Air Force and the Marine Corps, an E-6 becomes E-7.

In the Navy, each eligible Sailor for chief is required to be selected by a ranking and selection board composed of master chiefs who actively chooses the future leadership from the most capable



**Naval Hospital  
Bremerton *Caduceus* is an official  
Navy internal publication**

Capt. Patrick Fitzpatrick, NC, Commanding Officer  
Cmdr. Mark Lund, MC, Executive Officer  
Command Master Chief James B. May

Sailors, considering both their aptitude as technical experts and ability as leaders.

To signify the new leadership position of the chief petty officer rank, the time honored tradition of the chief’s pinning was created at the pay-grade’s inception in 1893.

Getting to that pinning is also a process. As Brayman, Cunningham, Jenkins and Soriano are about to find out...





# Naval Medical Forces Pacific Top Doc visits NMRTC Bremerton

*Mentoring from the top... Rear Adm. Guido F. Valdes, Naval Medical Forces Pacific commander, San Diego Military Health Systems market director and Navy Medical Corps chief, shares a few words with Hospitalman Alessandra Vera on being the Blue Jacket of the Quarter while serving as a laboratory technician and demonstrating exceptional leadership, initiative and dedication to duty. Also recognized were Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Joshua C. Hebert as Junior Sailor the Quarter for his stellar work in Physical Therapy and Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (Fleet Marine Force) Paul V. Delacruz as Senior Sailor of the Quarter for personifying high standard of performance and conduct. Each received a Navy letter of commendation from Valdes during his familiarization visit, Sept. 7, 2022*



*Coin surprised...Hospitalman Susanne Gonzalez is caught unawares with a challenge coin - as well as a few words of wisdom - for her expertise as a surgical tech in the Main Operating Room by Rear Adm. Guido F. Valdes, Naval Medical Forces Pacific commander, San Diego Military Health Systems market director and Navy Medical Corps chief, Sept. 7, 2022. Valdes visited NMRTC Bremerton, and Gonzalez, for a familiarization tour which included stops in Mental Health department, Patient Administration, Urgent Care Clinic and the Pharmacy, recognizing several Navy Civil Service employees, Navy officers and enlisted Sailors for their exemplary efforts in providing patient-centered care for all those in need (Official Navy photos by Douglas H Stutz, NHB/*



**NHB/NMRTC Bremerton Webpage:**  
<https://bremerton.tricare.mil/>

**NHB/NMRTC Bremerton Official Facebook site:**  
<https://www.facebook.com/navalhospitalebremerton>

**NHB on Defense Video Info Distro Service:**  
<https://www.dvidshub.net/tags/news/nmrtc-bremerton>

**NHB Command Ombudsman:**  
[nhb.ombudsman@gmail.com](mailto:nhb.ombudsman@gmail.com)



*Details and data from the deckplate...Rear Adm. Guido F. Valdes, Naval Medical Forces Pacific commander, San Diego Military Health Systems market director and Navy Medical Corps chief, converses with Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Jessica Pohl, assigned to NMRTU Bangor, on providing such medical support as medical screenings and special duty physicals for Sailors and Marines stationed at commands onboard Naval Base Kitsap Bangor. Valdes toured the clinic, Sept. 7, 2022, as part of his familiarization tour to Navy Medicine commands in the Pacific Northwest (all official Navy photos by Douglas H Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer).*



*Putting the bite in the fight explained...Lt. Cmdr. Sarah Duffy, comprehensive dentist assigned to NMRTU Bangor, provides a tour of the Dental Clinic to Rear Adm. Guido F. Valdes, Naval Medical Forces Pacific commander, San Diego Military Health Systems market director and Navy Medical Corps chief, which included describing the computer-aided-design/computer-aided-manufacturing milling machine used for producing and fabricating dental restorations for dental prostheses needs such as crowns, bridges and dentures. Valdes toured the clinic, Sept. 7, 2022, as part of his familiarization tour to Navy Medicine commands in the Pacific Northwest.*



*Giving props to processing... Rear Adm. Guido F. Valdes, Naval Medical Forces Pacific commander, San Diego Military Health Systems market director and Navy Medical Corps chief, extends congratulatory thanks to Navy Medicine Readiness Training Unit Bangor Sterile Processing Department team of Cathy Wheaton (front) and Naomi Padilla (back) for their continual effort in handling approximately 100 packs a day of medical gear and ensuring every piece of equipment used are meticulously disinfected and sterilized for the entire clinic. Valdes toured the clinic, Sept. 7, 2022, as part of his familiarization tour to Navy Medicine commands in the Pacific Northwest.*



## **I Am Navy Medicine, Lt. Travis J. Silvey, Health Care Administrator**

By Douglas H Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer -- It was no mere happenstance that Rear Adm. Guido F. Valdes, Naval Medical Forces Pacific commander, San Diego Military Health Systems market director and Navy Medical Corps chief stopped into Navy Medicine Readiness Training Command Bremerton



Human Resources Department during his initial familiarization visit, Sept. 7, 2022.

Because there was a behind-the-scenes but not behind-the-times Navy Medical Service Corps officer to acknowledge.

Lt. Travis J. Silvey was recognized for his continuous effort over the past year in juggling multiple responsibilities for NMRTC Bremerton's Directorate of Administration.

"I was genuinely surprised and appreciated the recognition. All credit goes to my hard working staff and my leaders who supported me," said Silvey.

The Kansas City, Missouri native and current department head of Human Resources has also held a number of other duties such as manpower analyst, Operational Security officer, DoD Performance Management Appraisal Program, and Physicians and Dentists Pay Plan coordinator.

After graduating from Park Hill High School in 2003, Silvey began his Navy career in 2005 as a hospital corpsman. He got his Associates in Arts at Florida State College in 2014, followed by his Bachelor of Science, Health Care Management at Southern Illinois University in 2017.

He was commissioned in 2018 through the Navy's Medical Service Corps in-service procurement program, which allows active duty Sailors the opportunity to become commissioned as an officer in the medical field. One of the chosen fields of expertise in the program is health care administration, where Silvey as excelled. He added his Master of Health Administration and Policy at Uniformed Services University in 2020.

“I joined the military to pay for college. I chose the Navy because my grandfather was a Navy veteran who influenced me when I was younger. In the early 2000s, the medical field was growing rapidly. I saw an opportunity to grow in a field where I could enjoy job satisfaction by helping others,” related Silvey, who has served at Naval Hospitals Jacksonville, Portsmouth and Walter Reed National Military Medical Center before his current duty station in the Pacific Northwest helping coordinate medical care to the nation’s third largest fleet concentration.

All his previous assignments have helped prepare him for his present responsibilities. When he was the leading petty officer from 2007 to 2014 for Naval Hospital Jacksonville Urology Department, he managed 16 staff members in treating approximately 3,200 patients annually. At Walter Reed National Military Medical Center from 2014 to 2018, he worked in Directorate of Surgery, Directorate for Resource Management and as the executive assistant to the command senior enlisted leader, managing over 40 personnel in ensuring patient-centered care to approximately 40,000 beneficiaries on an annual basis, along with providing executive administrative support in processing over 800 correspondences.

Those are just a few samples to illustrate Silvey’s current commitment in overseeing the day-to-day overlapping administrative needs of a military treatment facility. His command has added the DoD’s new electronic health record MHS GENESIS in 2017, played a major role in helping stop the spread of COVID-19 for over two years and has recently completed the transition of management and administration – as well as personnel, property and systems - from Naval Hospital Bremerton to the Defense Health Agency.

“I identified and transferred over 300 staff members from Department of the Navy to Department of Defense during the Military Treatment Facility Realignment of Personnel, Property and Systems,” Silvey said, affirming that it was challenging to juggle and coordinate not only active duty assignment but assist leadership in determining the multiple needs and requirements for the civil service staff.

“Frequently briefing and maintaining transparency of actions during a period of significant increased workload is challenging. I have been fortunate to have very supportive leadership,” said Silvey, noting that it’s been gratifying that his leadership has confidence in the tools provided they need during this transition.

The best part about Silvey’s career has been having access to great mentors and true professionals. Top lessons learned include, “trust but verify,” “data quality is paramount” and “serving my small part of Navy Medicine provides a disproportionate amount of job satisfaction.”

## **Air Quality Awareness in a Haze**

By Douglas H Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer – Spectacular sunsets and sunrises the last few days in the Pacific Northwest have come at a hazy cost.

Due to raging wildfires scorching thousands of acres from British Columbia to northern California, there’s been a murky layer which has settled over the entire area, which has even closed highways and mountain passes in Washington State.

The smoky pale across much of the Puget Sound region, home to the nation’s third largest fleet concentration, pushed the air quality index way above normal into the ‘very unhealthy’ range during the second weekend of September. Seattle was listed as the top city in the world with the worst air quality peaking at 243, September 9, 2022, with Portland, Oregon right behind at 224, San Francisco with a 195 reading and Vancouver, BC, Canada at 171.

Air Quality Index is a measurement tool, much like a thermometer. The higher the reading of a variety of pollutants from carbon monoxide to particulate matter, the greater the threat to personal health.

There are also a host of potential associated health risks that mirror COVID-19 symptoms, especially with those with sensitive to respiratory and cardiovascular system ailments.

“Wildfire smoke is a mix of gases and fine particles and can make anyone sick. Symptoms of breathing in smoke can include coughing, trouble breathing normally, scratchy throat, stinging eye, runny nose, irritated sinuses, wheezing, chest pain, headaches, asthma attack, tiredness, and fast heartbeat,” explained Cmdr. Carolyn Ellison, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton Director for Public Health.

According to the U.S. Air Quality Index, 0 to 50 as good, 51 to 100 as moderate, unhealthy for sensitive groups 101-150; the unhealthy range from 150 to 200, very unhealthy 201 to 300; and anything over 300 is in the hazardous range.

“People need to understand that air quality is something out of our control. However, there are things they can control regarding their activities and addressing any health concerns,” said Terry Lerma, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton emergency manager. “Over the weekend, local fire and EMS agencies responded to multiple calls of ‘smoke from unknown fire’ only to arrive and realize that the surrounding air quality was what gave the citizens the concern. Not that they were wrong, just not cognizant of the temporary change in the environmental conditions.”



Outside Naval Hospital Bremerton, the air quality index September 12, 2022 dropped to 79, considered acceptable. Yet the pollution range, lingering due to dry conditions mixed with high temperatures and low precipitation, is not helping matters.

What can someone do to lessen air pollutants at home, work and play?

“People who have any respiratory issues such as COPD, or emphysema should be aware on restricting their personal activities and consider measures to try and assist with filtering the air in their homes,” Lerma said. “For homes that have air conditioning, filtered fans, or some other sort of heat pump/AC, checking and cleaning the filters will help keep fresher, cleaner air inside their homes.”

Ellison affirmed to follow such general health tips when the air is smoky as staying indoors as much as possible, avoid vigorous outdoor activities, close the windows, recirculate air conditioning, and consider an air cleaner with a filter to have one room in your home with extra clean air.

“Stay informed with real-time air quality [index] monitoring to know what the situation is in your area. Several websites provided this information readily such as Washington State Department of Ecology at <https://enviwa.ecology.wa.gov/home/map>,” added Ellison.

In his capacity as a captain with South Kitsap Fire and Rescue, Lerma also strongly advocates for everyone to stay aware that the current warm weather and dry conditions can go from combustible to conflagration with just one small spark.

“Fire season is not over. The dry weather and wind are dangerous combinations and the conditions are ripe for a small vegetation fire that could easily blow up into a larger acreage fire. With all the recent construction of neighborhoods that have zero lot lines, it wouldn't take much for a vegetation fire to start a chain reaction of fire jumping from home to home in quick succession. Now also in the time with the ripe growing conditions to look at cutting back brush away from a residence, keeping the lawn mowed and trimming back branches that could allow ground vegetation to ladder up into the trees. Also note any dead trees or growths and have them cut back or cut down. They are the perfect fuels for a wildland fire,” stated Lerma.

There's a reason why Kitsap County went into a Phase 2 burn ban over the weekend calling for no outdoor fires allowed except in free standing barbeque appliances using natural gas or propane fuel.

“There are still citizens who feel that on their own property, they can burn brush piles or have back-to-school bonfires,” noted Lerma. “The potential for the wind to catch and carry an ember, and then ignite other dry brush is too high of a risk at this time. Even with the momentary rain drizzle some areas experienced over the weekend is not enough to minimize or eliminate the fire dangers.”

At this time, it is hoped that the worst of the wildfire smoke impact on Western Washington air quality may be over for this summer,” said Ellison. “Please contact your healthcare provider if you are experiencing concerning symptoms related to smoke or call 911 if your symptoms are severe.”



## Safety Check Walk-In for Mental Health

By Douglas H Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer -- NMRTC Bremerton provides daily safety check walk-in availability in the Mental Health Department for all active duty service members, during normal work hours from Monday to Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.



According to said Lt. Maxwell Anderson, staff psychologist, any active duty can come up to the clinic and request to schedule an appointment if there is a referral in the system.

If there is not a referral already generated, the patient will be assisted by behavioral health technicians, usually in conjunction with their primary care manager or independent duty corpsman.

"Safety check walk-in sessions are reserved for individuals having safety concerns or crisis," said Anderson.

Additionally, for anyone in need, they can reach out for support at the Military Crisis Line, a free confidential resource for all service members, including members of the National Guard, reservists, and veterans, even if not enrolled in VA benefits or a health care. Dial 988 then press 1. Additionally, as of July 16, 2022, the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is now 988 also, specifically set up for easy access to crisis care.

The new shorter phone number will make it easier for people to remember and access for mental health crisis services.

Although NHB/NMRTC Bremerton is the primary medical treatment facility for the nation's third largest fleet concentration, there are also embedded units with their own psychologist for walk-in safety check, such as with Submarine Group Nine and USS Nimitz (CVN 68) and USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).



For those who can't – or are hesitant – to make a walk-in commitment, assistance and guidance is just a phone call away at the 988 Military Crisis Line or by calling the Mental Health Department, 360-475-4219.

“If a patient calls with safety concerns and is unsure if they are able to make it into Mental Health, a safety check assessment will be done over the phone to make certain the patient is getting the care/help which they need, even following up at our clinic or contacting [their] command to help get the patient to the nearest emergency room, if necessary,” explained Anderson.

There are a number of factors which may affect anyone's mental health wellness, including anger, anxiety, depression, sexual trauma, sleep, spirituality, stress and work.

The Mental Health Department provides a wide array of outpatient behavioral health services to address those mental health wellness concerns, such as individual psychotherapy, military specific psychological evaluations, and Personnel Reliability Program personnel evaluations. The psychological assessments of Sailors, Marines and Coast Guard personnel across tenet commands in the region are essential in supporting the warfighter through psychological fitness for duty.

**Services provided include:**

- Suicide risk phone assessment to determine appropriate level of care.
- Mental Health safety assessment and treatment planning visits for patients upon discharge from inpatient psychiatry units and residential treatment programs.
- Fitness for duty evaluation for PRP, Recruiting duty, ROTC.
- Individual psychotherapy and counseling.
- Psychiatry evaluation and medication management.
- Group psychotherapy for:
  - Building resiliency
  - Treatment of psychological trauma
  - Eliminating self-harm behaviors
  - Anger management
  - Insomnia

Access to care in a military treatment facility like NMRTC Bremerton is usually five days. Getting an appointment in the surrounding network can take approximately five weeks. Virtual options are available on a same day basis. That flexibility in delivery of care allows patients to be seen either face-to-face through video-assisted modalities or via tele-conference connectivity in delivering clinical psychological assessments or psychiatric medication management for numerous active-duty and veterans across Idaho, Montana, Alaska, Oregon and Washington.

In 2021, the Mental Health Department bolstered behavioral health technician engagement with patient care by 800 percent to improve their impact in operational environments. Additionally, Mental Health and the Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program (SARP) established improved templates across the department to facilitate productivity standards 46 percent higher than established Medical Group Management Association guidelines for active duty psychologist personnel.

SARP division also achieved Washington State certification as the only certified SARP program in a military treatment facility in the entire region across Joint Forces. Numbers help to tell the story. In 2021, there were approximately 13,400 substance abuse patient visits. There have been nearly 8,700 substance abuse patient visits through July, 2022.

**SARP services offered include:**

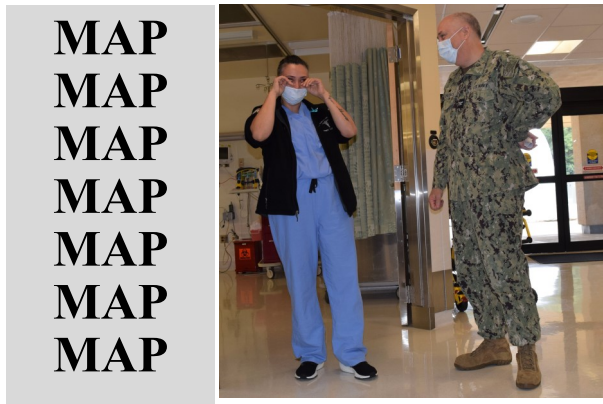
- Substance Use Disorder Screening and Treatment Program placement
- Prime for Life Substance Use Education Program
- Level I Outpatient Substance Use Disorder Treatment
- Level II Intensive Substance Use Disorder Treatment
- Referral and coordination for service members requiring substance use.
- Continuing Care Relapse Prevention and Pre-Care treatment engagement.



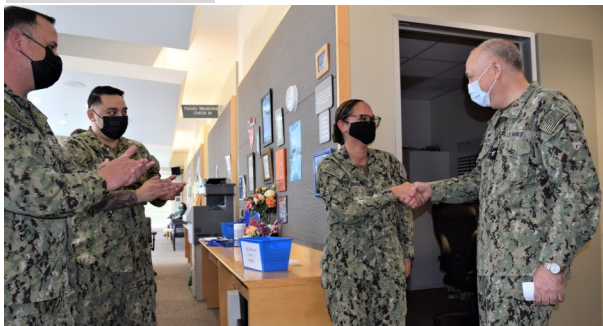
*A tearful surprise of joy...Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Monica Yineman is officially congratulated to her new rank as hospital corpsman first class by Capt. Patrick Fitzpatrick, NHB director and NMRTC Bremerton commanding officer. Yineman was one of seven command Sailors meritoriously promoted to the next higher paygrade. Each of the following Sailors were also selected for advancement:*

***Hospital Corpsmen 3rd Class Aaron Foxworth, Estella Obando and Christian Velasquez to hospital corpsmen second class.***

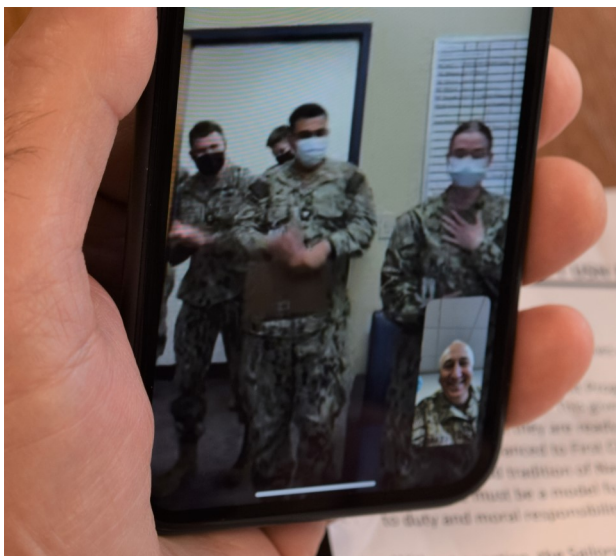
***Hospitalmen Harlan Bryant, James Dryburgh and Haylie Gwaltney to hospital corpsmen third class.***



*The Meritorious Advancement Program authorizes commanding officers to advance eligible enlisted Sailors in paygrades E5 and below. This gives commanding officers the opportunity to acknowledge a select few who have demonstrated that they are ready for the next level of responsibility by advancing them in rate. Sailors who are meritoriously advanced become heir to a long and proud tradition of Naval leadership. Their desire to excel and to guide others must be boundless; their appearance must be a model for others and their performance must be a continual reflection of their sincerity, attention to duty and moral responsibility.*



*Taken by surprise...Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Estella Obando (Left) is officially congratulated to her new rank as hospital corpsman second class by Capt. Patrick Fitzpatrick, NHB director and NMRTC Bremerton commanding officer. Obando was one of seven command Sailors meritoriously promoted to the next higher paygrade. Each of the additional Sailors was also selected for advancement:*



*Long Distance Congrats...Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Christian Velasquez and Hospitalman Haylie Gwaltney (Left) are surprised with an impromptu teleconference call from Capt. Patrick Fitzpatrick, NHB director and NMRTC Bremerton commanding officer on their meritoriously promotion to the next highest rank and pay grade, respectively*

*(Official Navy photos by Douglas H Stutz, NHB/ NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer).*



## On the Cross Country Recovery Road Less Traveled

By Douglas H Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer -- After suffering through a serious bout of sepsis, followed by a heart attack necessitating open-heart surgery and then repair for an excruciating hernia, there was just one obvious course of recuperation for Pat Flaherty to follow.

That chosen road of recovery for Flaherty, Naval Hospital Bremerton chief information officer and wife Terri, both avid cyclists, was a lengthy labor of love.

It began along the Pacific shores of Washington State and ended at Bar Harbor, Maine, on the Atlantic coast.

The Port Orchard couple bicycled 3,762 miles across North America, along winding rivers, across vast plains and up steep mountain inclines.

They pedal-powered by past silent rural farmland, through picturesque small towns and amid urban cityscapes.

It was a journey of physical exertion, mental challenge and emotional relief. It was hard and taxing as well as fun and enjoyable. The journey itself – dubbed the ‘Bonus Round Tour’ - became the destination, and allowed Patrick to mend his wounds, and bring to fulfillment a lifelong dream.

Yet before even embarking on such an adventure, there were a few hurdles to clear, including convincing Patrick’s primary care manager he wasn’t intent on just spinning his wheels.

“I initially shared the vision with my PCM after sepsis. She was supportive but somewhat skeptical. After the heart attack, I inquired with my cardiologist. He was totally supportive. I met with him again just prior to the trip and he was just as supportive. He said, “My concern with patients is not that they exercise too much, but not enough,”” said Patrick.

Planning for their cross-country tour started in 2020 while recovering from sepsis. Terri assisted Patrick to setting



up a home gym for cycling training and physical therapy rehabilitation. There were long rides put in sometimes as early as 4 a.m. Training paid off with both taking part in a century – 100 miles – bicycle ride, September, 2021.

Then a coronary catastrophe followed several months later in December.

“It turns out I had a bicuspid aortic valve that needed to be replaced. Eleven weeks after heart surgery Terri and I, along with other family and friends, rode the ‘Chilly Hilly,’ a 33-mile organized ride the last Sunday in February on Bainbridge Island,” related Patrick.

After completing that ride, planning began in earnest to undertake the long journey. Yet another medical crisis happened. Patrick was diagnosed with a hernia in April, 2022, which needed to be repaired.

Rather than being discouraged from the back-to-back-to-back injuries, there was just more fuel added to the fire to make the goal a reality.

“I can honestly say I never wavered on the dream. Each setback was just another thing to overcome. When putting the home gym together after sepsis, I picked up a decal to go on the wall. It reads, “There will come a day when you cannot do this, today is not that day.” After finishing my last infusion for sepsis, I saved the syringe. The plan was to zip tie it to the rack when making the ride. That is exactly what I did this summer. That syringe made it from coast-to-coast. Only one person asked about it, but I drew strength from it. It reminded me how much I had overcome and whatever I was facing was nothing compared to that. My medical team was fantastic and gave me the confidence anything was possible even after open-heart surgery,” explained Patrick.

Terri attests that Patrick’s health, as well as independent streak, have always been a focal point.

“Patrick took steps with his cardiologist and health team to monitor his condition and be cognizant of the risks. I couldn’t be more proud of him and grateful with how well he’s recovered. Being in a relationship with someone who inspires me to advance my physical health and abilities alongside him is invaluable,” stated Terri.

The hernia recovery took six weeks. Patrick and Terri, joined by daughter Ruth, departed on their tour six weeks and five days post hernia surgery. Ruth traveled with her parents as far as Montana. In 2018 Ruth had joined Patrick in bicycling 1,185 miles along the entire Pacific coastline of Washington, Oregon and California.

Heading cross country, they decided on following the American Cycling Association ‘Northern Tier’ route which took them from Washington on through Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan. From Escanaba, Michigan, they angled north and followed the Trans Canadian highway, reentering back into the U.S. at Cornwall, New York, before continuing on another 406 miles through Vermont and New Hampshire to finish at Bar Harbor, Maine.

If there was one constant along the way, it was that there were really no easy days.

Every day had its share of struggles. One day it would be hills, another wind, rain, cold. There were also ‘food deserts’ with limited access for nutritional needs. There was also the summer heat.

Their daily routine was kept as simple as possible.

They would rise early, pack up camp, go over the planned route for that day, review the weather forecast, identify where to get food and water, and decide on a suitable stopping point. Out of their 74 days, there were just ten days with no cycling.

Five days were due to weather conditions and the other handful of days were to rest. However, there were times when the best laid plans simply didn’t pan out as expected.

“We ended up riding 98 miles one day when the motel we were planning to stay at was full, causing us to back-track 12 miles to the next nearest hotel,” said Patrick.

Terri was anointed early on with the nickname, ‘Quad Crusher.’

“Because she often pushed the pace causing my quads to burn the first five miles of the day,” quipped Patrick.



For the majority of their tour, it was all self-supported. One of their sons helped to transport their panniers as they negotiated 40 miles up a rain-swept mountain pass with 6,000 feet elevation gain.

“This was in the fifth day of riding and we were still getting into condition. Other than that, we were entirely self-supported,” related Patrick.

The tour allowed them both to recharge and revitalize, one mile at a time.

“It was rejuvenating but not in the immediate way that you might think. There were nights that were dark, wet, and discouraging. But the power that I felt from getting up that next day and continuing on is something I will carry with me forever,” shared Terri.

The long hours of solitary riding were interspersed with occasional poignant moments with others along the way.

“Sharing inspired others to pursue their dreams. This happened early at a coffee shop in Anacortes, Washington. I was sharing the dream with the person in front of me and the person behind started to cry. They had a dream that was buried and fading. Hearing my story touched them in a way I didn't anticipate. On the last day, I asked a bystander to take our picture and after hearing our story, they too were inspired. In between there were many other stories just like these,” said Patrick, adding that they were grateful recipients of several random acts of kindness.

“Without exception, everyone was supportive and excited for us,” Patrick said. “People went out of their way to help us. Which included the bike mechanics that dropped what they were doing to get us back on the road and an RV park owner that let us to stay for free when there was nothing else around. We live in a beautiful country with a lot of wonderful, giving people.”

At the onset of the tour, Patrick hoped to follow through on the dream he had when growing up. Upon completion of all those cross-country miles, he accomplished that and more.

“I proved to myself that big things are still possible at 60, that there is life after sepsis and heart surgery, and to never, ever, give up on your dream,” asserted Patrick.

When asked what posed the most challenge of this unique undertaking, Patrick replied, “It would have to be getting out of my own head and sharing the vision with my boss, then asking for the time off to make it happen. It should be noted that the entire leadership team was supportive. That support included my recovery periods and then time off for the trip.”

For Terri, the tour provided a reflective connection from their early days as a young couple to their current and dynamic growth as husband and wife.

“When I was a young woman I wanted to do an extensive ride in Mexico that was over 70 miles. None of my girlfriends wanted to do the ride. I was the only one in my group with the vision to embark on that particularly journey. My parents, who had my best interest at heart, sincerely asked for me to find somebody to ride with and I continued to look for someone to join me. One of my friends said there was a young man just as ambitious with a similar vision. I took the opportunity since I really wanted to do the ride. That is how my respect and romance with Patrick started. We did the ride. Not only once, but annually for the next four years. One of the things I admired about Patrick was his ability to dream. He spoke of a ride across the country. Something, I hadn't even considered yet. Inspired by his vision, it's something that we carried with us through eight kids and 38 years of marriage. To know that we aged together to be physically and emotionally capable of accomplishing this journey after a full life together is incredibly empowering,” stated Terri.

The future remains in flux for them both. Although Patrick says they're still figuring out what's next, there are plans afoot.

“There's a 10k run as part of marathon training Terri and I will be doing together coming up. I have some time to develop a plan while I accrue a leave balance again,” Patrick shared.

## **I Am Navy Medicine – from Pacific Partnership to 3rd Med Battalion – Cmdr. Mathie**

By Douglas H Stutz, NHB/NMRTC Bremerton public affairs officer -- When official notification was sent on Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery's selection of the next chief nursing officer for the Marine Corps' 3d Medical Battalion, the chosen top candidate was wrapping up an assignment with all the trademarks of why he was nominated.

Cmdr. Cameron Mathie, assigned to Navy Medicine Readiness Training Unit Everett, was deployed on hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) participating in Pacific Partnership 2022 when he got the news of being tabbed for the position.

"I learned of and applied for the position while on Pacific Partnership 2022 deployment. I was pretty excited and honored to learn that I was chosen," said Mathie, noting that prior experience assigned to the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, Okinawa, Japan and provided a wealth of experience as a ready medical force supporting Marines Corps mission readiness in the Indo-Pacific area of operation. "I am excited to be a part of that mission again."

During Pacific Partnership 22, the 17th iteration of the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific, Mathie was casualty receiving staff nurse for a 12-bed Emergency Department for 750 assigned military and Military Sealift Command staff.



*HONIARA, Solomon Islands (Aug. 31, 2022) - Lt. Cmdr. Cameron Mathie, from Chalfont, Pennsylvania, right, assists patients with medical personnel at the National Referral Hospital in Honiara during Pacific Partnership 2022. It was during his deployment as part of the mission that Mathie was informed he had been selected as the next chief nursing officer for the Marine Corps' 3d Medical Battalion. Now in its 17th year, Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multinational humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Pacific. Pacific Partnership is a unifying mission that fosters enduring friendships and cooperation among many nations. The year's mission in Solomon Islands will include participants from the United States, Japan and Australia. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Drace Wilson)*



The mission made stops in Vietnam, Palau, the Philippines and Solomon Island, working with each host nation and other joint military and civilian organizations. As an integral part of providing medical care to those in need, Mathie found his experience rewarding on both a personal as well as professional basis, including having the opportunity to interact with other colleagues and host country peers.

“Getting to interact with their medical staff, and see how they provide care, often with limited resources is pretty amazing. Things that we considered rare in western medicine are common place. It really served to open your eyes to how fortunate we are, and what kind of amazing job people can do even given limited resources,” exclaimed Mathie.

While visiting Palau, an archipelago of more than 500 islands in the western Pacific between the Philippines and Guam, which includes the island Peleliu, site of a bloody WWII battle in 1944 during the island hopping campaign by the U.S. against Imperial Japanese forces, Mathie was called upon to use his clinical skills in a medical emergency.

“We had an unexpected [cardiac arrest] code in Palau and our military team ran the entire code. We achieved return of spontaneous circulation, intubated, sedated and managed the patient until transfer to the intensive care unit,” related Mathie.

Mathie was also busy helping with medical care during two weeks of collaboration the Solomon Islands, from late August to Sept. 10, 2022. There were 5,610 patients seen, 46 surgeries conducted aboard USNS Mercy with another 15 surgeries performed on ashore with the host nation.

Pacific Partnership 2022 has added to Mathie’s journey, which began in Chalfont, Pennsylvania, attending Central Bucks High School in West Doylestown, receiving his Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 2006 from the University of Pittsburgh and achieving his Master’s of Science in Nursing from Loyola University of Chicago in 2014. He set his sights early on a military career.

“I always wanted to serve. In my senior year of high school I applied for and was accepted for a NROTC Scholarship at Pitt. I wanted to do medicine and the Navy offered the better scholarship over the Army,” related Mathie, with over 16 years of active duty service and currently the department head for NMRTU Everett Medical Home Port.

He has also been an emergency department staff nurse, charge nurse, 31st MEU trauma nurse, and emergency department clinical nurse specialist. The Navy has taken him all over the world, to 60 countries and counting.

“I also look for the most exciting and challenging opportunity. I choose not to be complacent and it has led to some pretty interesting moments in my life. Now with a family - wife, son, daughter and a dog - I am interested in finding a good work/life balance to enjoy my family, Mathie said.

His upcoming duties with 3rd Med Battalion will have him leading the cadre of nurses assigned to the battalion, working with leadership to ensure operational readiness to meet the mission requirements, along with expanding training opportunities.

The 3d Medical Battalion is a medical support unit under the command of 3rd Marine Logistics Group of the U.S. Marine Corps, headquartered at Camp Foster, Okinawa, Japan. Their mission is to provide direct and general health service support to the III Marine Expeditionary Force of approximately 19,000 Marines and Sailors, in order to sustain the combat effort across the full spectrum of Marine Air-Ground Task Force operations.

Mathie attests that the best part about his career has been the opportunity to travel, as well as the rapport he has established with many co-workers..

“Seeing many of the countries not as a tourist but as a member of the Navy where we are working side-by-side with our host nation partners. Additionally, it is all the people I have met and befriended over the years. I’ve left each duty station with a group of people that I can call life-long friends. There aren’t many careers in the world that afford this opportunity,” stated Mathie.

When asked to sum up his experience with Navy Medicine in one sentence, Mathie replied, “It’s not always easy, but there are times when you take a step back and realize that the amazing opportunity you’ve been afforded could happen nowhere else.”